

THE CASE OF PAUL BECK, RULE-OF-THUMB DETECTIVE

CABINET SECRETS

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HE LEANED WITH TREMBLING HANDS AGAINST

has, to a large extent, forced them upon us."

"Well, but is such a man likely to risk his great career by petty treason. To give his enemies—for he has bitter enemies, we know—such a handle against him?"

"The danger may seem slight, and the temptation is great. I hate to say it, but Brandal is the only poor man in our cabinet."

"But it is not the poor that are always greedy. Brandal has never shown any love for money. He married his beautiful wife, Fanny Power, the fair maid of Erin," as she was called, without a farthing. There is no corner in the man's character, Arthur, for suspicion to lay hold of."

The prime minister laid his hand kindly on his friend's shoulder. "Charles," he said, "the generosity of your character blinds you. This man has frequently and fiercely attacked you, therefore you feel bound to defend him. He is your sole rival for any place, which, in the course of nature, I cannot hold much longer; therefore you instinctively and chivalrously uphold him. If you had not pressed me on his behalf, he would not now be in the cabinet. I wish he weren't."

"Don't say that Arthur; you'll find I'm right."

"I cannot even say I hope you are right. If it isn't Brandal, it's some one else. The matter must be tested, and I have taken the first step."

"There's a man here in London whose methods in running down criminals and imposters are curiously unlike those of the rest of the profession. He acknowledges no theory of detecting except the rule of thumb, but I confess that the reports of his masterly handling of certain cases have made me feel under my skin. This man, Paul Beck, is coming here this morning at my request. I'm going to give him the job of finding the leak in parliament."

Lord Weldon had heard of Mr. Beck and expressed his approval of the prime minister's action. He was interrupted by the entrance of the servant with Mr. Beck's card. The prime minister motioned his friend to remain, and Paul Beck was shown in.

The rule of thumb detective was as unassuming unburied and quite obviously unaffected by the importance of an interview with England's prime minister. But with characteristic bluntness he came straight to the point, after he had acknowledged the brief introduction to Lord Weldon.

"You have sent for me, sir. I take it, to tell me of the trouble in the cabinet, I suppose; the whole town is talking of it."

"I have heard," he said, "you have already engaged in matters of great delicacy and of great public importance, and that your discretion has been equal to your ability"—Mr. Beck acknowledged the compliment with a deprecatory smile, "but never before, let me assure you, in a matter of delicacy or importance comparable to this. The honor of a cabinet, the fate of a government, the vital interest of an empire are involved in the detection of this treason."

"I will do my best," said the detective tranquilly. It was his universal formula.

"Need I say that the most absolute secrecy is essential?" said the prime minister.

"You need not," said Mr. Beck shortly. "If you want me, you must trust me, of course."

Then very briefly and clearly the prime minister set the meager facts of the case before him. One thing alone was certain—a cabinet minister was the culprit.

"Not a look or tone escaped Mr. Beck while the prime minister spoke."

"You suspect some one?" he said, when the other concluded.

"I do, but I would rather not tell his name. It is not that I doubt your discretion," he added quickly, "but I should never forgive myself if I were mistaken."

"I don't want his name at present," said Mr. Beck. "Later on we may have to make that suspicion certain, one way or the other. The first step, however, is plainly to call on the editor of the Times."

"Do you think he will help us?"

"Not if he can avoid it. You see, he knows nothing of the foreign complications, and he will regard the home revelations as good newspaper business, but he may help us in spite of

"I see," said Mr. Beck. "Well, I won't have any more of your valuable time."

"You will pardon me for not being more explicit, Mr. Beck," said the editor. "You see this thing helps us from the present and political point of view. It gives us exclusive and important news, and it hurts the government. I could not give the man the credit."

"Don't mention it," said Mr. Beck. "Besides, I'm not sure that you have not put me on the right track."

With this parting shot he passed out leaving the editor puzzled and uncomfortable.

"You don't seem to have made much advance," said Lord Weldon, when this interview was related with perfect frankness next day.

"That's as it may be," said Mr. Beck, "one can never be sure."

"Could we catch the letters to the Times in the post office?" suggested the prime minister. "It's a hateful expedient of course, but desperate diseases need desperate remedies."

"I understand the letters are dropped in by the private hand of the waiter."

"Your lordship has guessed quite rightly," said Mr. Beck; "the post office cannot help us."

"Have you anything yourself to propose?" asked the prime minister, a little impatiently.

"The next step it seems to me," said Mr. Beck quietly, "is to put your suspicions to the test."

"Can you do that effectively?"

"I think I can."

"Without knowing the name?"

"Without knowing the name, if you and his lordship will help me."

"Let us hear your plan?" said Lord Weldon.

"First, I must know, has the suspected man been present at all the cabinet meetings whose proceedings were betrayed?"

"Not all," answered the prime minister; "there were two at least—I am almost certain there were three—from which he was absent."

"Does not that fact alone clear him?"

"I'm afraid not, because he would be entitled to the right of silence, and hear, from some other member of the cabinet, what had gone on in his absence. I remember I told him myself on one occasion."

"That brings me straight to my plan. You can arrange, I presume, that he shall be absent from the next meeting. Let him have an account of the proceedings the reverse of the fact, as circumstantial as possible. If this account appears in the Times there will be no doubt who put it there."

The prime minister shook his head.

"I don't like the notion," he said; "it seems a shabby, treacherous trick."

"It is not treacherous," said Mr. Beck, "perfectly fair," broke in Lord Weldon, "as well as exceedingly ingenious. If the man does not hunt, as I believe him to be, he does not know his own mind, and the contrary. If he is guilty, no device is shabby that convicts him. It is almost certain he has had something to do with that. I could not if I tried."

"Then, I will," replied Lord Weldon, "if I do not mind." "I don't share your suspicions, Arthur," said the prime minister, "a suspected man is entitled to the opportunity of vindicating his character. If he cannot do so, he is guilty."

"At the cabinet council, you know, the day after tomorrow, we are to consider the recommendation of the purchase in our English land bill. There is intense excitement on the question. I should like to see the man spy. If you can keep Brandal away from the meeting, I'll undertake the rest."

"I'll have no difficulty at all in providing him with an urgent appointment elsewhere," said the prime minister.

"I'll be glad to do it," said Lord Weldon, "if he found himself knocking impatiently at the door of Lord Weldon's private secretary, or on a short distance from the prime minister's residence."

"His lordship is not arisen yet," said the prime minister.

"All right. I only want you to take him a note at once; it is most urgent," and Mr. Beck offered him a note which he wrote in a few minutes.

Lord Weldon got the note on a salver with his coffee in bed. It ran:

My Lord: I think it essential that I should have a word with you this morning, as soon as possible. I did not like to disturb him, so I have taken the liberty of calling on your secretary. I shall be glad to see you. You can see him soon to arrange it.

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What the Devastating Flood of War Means to French and Belgian Families Caught in Its Path

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to the communal stores, and there they may purchase stipulated amounts of dried peas and beans, bacon and lard, potatoes and rice and occasionally a little dried fish and macaroni. Those who have a great deal of money and can afford to pay prices which are prohibitive to all but the wealthy, may then pay small quantities of homegrown vegetables and fruit and a very little fresh meat. The days when these extra rations may be had are only red-letter days in homes where once there was nothing but abundance. Only the children in Belgium and occupied France are fully fed. The present generation is on the rack, but the future generation must be saved. That's why the children eat at the canteens. There are canteens for students and for women about to become mothers. There are others for weakly children, those tragic little figures whose bodies and minds both are stunned by the shock of war. Their needs are studied by skilled physicians and sympathetic nurses, nuns from the Belgian convents and American and English women sharing in this work. The older children and the adults willingly submit to increased privations that others will not be adequately nourished. In their frail bodies they endure the future of the race.

WashTh

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In Belgium and northern France the Germans have taken over the entire charge of agriculture. Old men, women and children are compelled to work the fields. Their masters take the crops they grow. They are given small quantities of vegetables and other produce, but not enough to sustain life. Of grain, they get none at all. It all goes to help support the "army of occupation." Even those who cultivate the soil and grow many times enough to feed them are forced to deposit an outside charity for a part of their subsistence.

The invaders demanded that 500,000 able-bodied, skilled Belgian workmen go to Germany to help produce munitions for the war.

They were willing to engage in non-war work at home, but they would not be sent to support the "army of occupation" of their brothers. Then the deportations began. Between 100,000 and 150,000 Belgians were deported to Germany—absolutely slaves in chains.

The deluge of misfortune did not diminish the fires that flamed at Liege. The Belgians still refused to work. The Germans resorted to the most cruel. They were crowded into foul pens and tortured with scientific ingenuity. But they were not crushed. They refused to work. Their cruelty ran away with them. Soon the Belgians were incapable of any more resistance.

THEY KNOW IT. THEY KNOW IT. THEY KNOW IT.

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ALL THAT IS LEFT OF HER OWN
(Additional) photographs in Plain mind and body forever. To keep them in Germany meant some tax on the foodstuffs, however slight. So they were sent home, a pitiful procession, to be fed by American, British and French charity. A train arrived at Antwerp with 250 of them on board. All had to be carried from the train on stretchers. Fifty of those on the stretchers already were dead.

In America, two wheatless days, a meatless day, a porkless day each week! "A horrid, ruthless thing is war," the American laments.

Yes, the conquered peoples on the German side of the line that stretches from Antwerp to the sea know what war means. THEY KNOW IT. THEY KNOW IT. THEY KNOW IT.



THE tender infant in its cradle. And in the trenches today there are thousands upon thousands of French and Belgian soldiers, ready to "die like men, with sword in hand," who are haunted, day and night, by the dreadful question: "But oh, what fate my Gertrude has been thine?"

Back of the allied lines in France—the back of the French, the British and now the American legions, who are drawn up there for the great struggle which is to pay the Hun his score—their hearts also know what war means. Be-

THE cat as a slayer of birds has been indicted times without number. He and she have not only been indicted, but have been convicted. The cat as a pitiless destroyer of bird life is the text of a discussion that has been carried on for many years and the end of it still seems to be a long way off. The owl has recently come in for his share of criticism, by both the friends of cats and the friends of birds, at least by the friends of other birds than owls.

A good while ago Thomas M. Upp, national organizer of the Order of Backwoodsmen and a naturalist of note, wrote: "The question as to whether rodents or insects are the more destructive is altogether academic. Either, if unchecked, would sweep the earth bare. The problem is complicated by the fact that every rodent destroyer takes some birds. The question is, what species takes the fewest birds in proportion to rodents destroyed? I say—and the evidence is overwhelming—that, with the possible exception of the marsh hawk, there is no rodent destroyer which, in taking care of its capture of rodents, takes so few birds as does the cat."

Dr. A. K. Fisher of the biological survey in defending the character of the owl said that in the case of the long-eared owl an investigation showed that fifty "pellets" contained the remains of 137 mice, 26 shrews and 13 birds, and that it would be both preposterous and cruel to molest so innocent and valuable a bird.

There are two words, "pellets" and "shrews," which probably require explanation to readers who are not deeply learned in birds and rodents. A pellet is the indigestible part of food they have swallowed, and one who is not a bird, but a human, might praise the of the owl wrote:

"These castings, or 'pellets,' may be seen under any owl roost, and show

Where once were happy villages, are ruins. Where once smiled fertile fields, are wastes. Where once were the serried trenches, of tangled wire and of the dead. It is as if some dreadful plague had visited some cursed land. There are no strong men to reclaim the ruins, no women to sow the seed in the trenches. The task is left to the old men, to the women and children to be left behind.

But they are not appeased by the work. They are not satisfied with the

MAJORS OF BIRDS

It is mainly the great service these birds render to man, in destroying his enemies, that makes them so valuable. The plumage of owls is exceedingly loose and soft, so that their flight is noiseless, enabling them to swoop upon their prey, which they hunt in the dark of night. Their range of action is globe, extending to the extreme polar regions, and to the remotest oceanic islands.

The word "shrew," as applied to an animal, will probably puzzle a good many of our readers. There are several species, one called the common shrew and the other the lesser or pigmy shrew. The latter is especially numerous in Europe, is about the size of a mouse, and closely resembles it in shape of body, feet and tail, but its muzzle protrudes far beyond the lip and the eyes are so small that they are scarcely discernible through the fur. The ears are wide and short and the hind legs are so long that the hind feet are rounded off.

The pigmy shrew is the commonest in our country, and is found in insects and worms and small molluscs. It lives in a nest of dry herbage and mosses, and the hole at the hind end of the spring, the mother shrew bringing forth from five to seven little ones. It is a most voracious animal, and a great pest if their increase were not checked by the owls, though they are weeded also by the winter of the owl in this work.

A common mole often met with in the fields is a member of the shrew family. Its snout is slender and pointed, and its feet are webbed. The true common mole belongs to a different genus, and, although it is a member of the same family and its eyes are inconspicuous, its hind feet are not webbed. The most common of the moles is the earthworm, though it will eat any kind of vegetable matter, and is contrary to popular belief, the mole will not eat flesh matter, such as grass roots, or other grubbery.

The Judge and the Expert.

MAYOR HYLAN of New York has no belief in efficiency experts, and has banished them from the city hall. He has, however, undertaken to teach Judge Hyman, as he then was, a lesson some years ago.

"I observe, Judge," the man said, "that you give no credit to your boy, Jimmy. That's a great mistake."

"But he's the most worthless little

"Judge," the expert interrupted, with a superior smile, "I'm going to give you an efficiency lesson." Take Jimmy back, for instance at his work, and there's no surer sign of efficiency."

"Humph, that's no sign," said Judge Hyman. "A lesson, do that."

Self-Raising.

FOOD CONTROLLER HOOVER told at a meatless-wheatless banquet story about a poultry proffiter.

"A lady entered his shop," said Mr. Hoover, "and asked the price of chicken. 'Them birds in the winder' said the proffiter. 'Wall, they're very fine quality, but I can't go for less than 90 cents a pound.'"

"Indeed?" said the lady. "Dis you raise chickens?"

"-Yep, said the proffiter absently. They was 70 cents yesterday."

A Valuable Machine.

CAPTAIN ANDERSON PLANA, who has just got married at Flattsburg, is a grandson of the founder, Charles D. and in an interview he said:

"My grandfather believed in marriage. He thought it steadied a man. I remember story he used to tell."

"It's a story about a chap who asked a man:

"'How you ever heard anything about a machine for telling when a man is lying?'"

"'Yes,' said the man."

"'Have you ever seen one?'" said the chap."

"'I've seen one,'" said the man. 'By gosh, I married one!'"



ALL THAT IS LEFT OF HER ONCE SNUG LITTLE HOME IN FRANCE.
(Additional photographs in Planography Section of this issue.)

THE DESTROYERS OF BIRDS

THE cat is the slayer of birds has been indicted times without number. He and she have not only been indicted, but have been convicted. The cat as a pitiless destroyer of bird life is the text of a discussion that has been carried on for many years. It seems to me to be a long way off. The owl has recently come in for his share of criticism by both the friends of cats and the friends of birds, at least by the friends of other birds than owls.

While ago Thomas M. Upp, national organizer of the Order of Backwoodsmen and naturalist of note, wrote: "The question as to whether rodents or insects are the more numerous pests of birds. Either, if unchecked, would sweep the earth bare. The problem is complicated, for the bird takes the food the bird destroyer takes some birds. The question is, what species takes the food of the bird destroyer?"

Dr. A. K. Fisher of the biological survey in defending the character of the long-eared owl an investigation showed that fifty "pellets" contained 13 mice, 26 shrews and 13 birds, and that it would be both pernicious and unprofitable to so innocent a valuable bird.

There are two words here, 'pellets' and 'mice' that need a little explanation to readers who are not deeply learned in birds and rodents. All the birds that eat mice and shrews have the indigestible parts of food they have swallowed, and one of the commonest praises of the owl wrote:

"These castings, or 'pellets,' may be seen after any owl roosts, and show

plainly the great service these render to man in destroying rats. The plumage of owls is especially loose, and the feathers, even in the largest species, is a noiseless, enabling them to fly upon their prey without being detected at twilight. They range over the globe, visiting the remotest regions, and the remotest islands.

The word "shrew," as applied to a small animal, will probably puzzle a many persons. There are two distinct species of shrews, and the other the lesser or the shrew. The common shrew, especially the long-eared shrew, the shape of a mouse, and closely resembles shape of body, feet and tail, but the shrew has a much longer tail, its eyes are so small that they are scarcely discernible through the fur. The shrew has a long tail, the tail is four-sided, with the edges sharp and pointed.

The pigmy shrew is the common in the United States. It is much smaller than the common shrew. It lives in a nest of dry leaves in a hole in the ground and it builds its nest of dry leaves, bringing forth from five to seven shrews. Shrews would no doubt be exterminated if they were not checked by the owls, the weasels also an efficient destroyer of shrews.

A common mole often met with in the woods is the shrew mole and is a member of the shrew family. Its snout is slender and it has a great number of its feet are webbed. The true common mole belongs to a different genus, and its feet are webbed, and its feet are inconspicuous, its feet are long and narrow. The mole though it will eat any kind of animal matter, the mole will not eat shrubby matter, such as grass roots or roots of bushes or shrubbery.

teach Judge Hylan, as he then was, a lesson some years ago. The man said, "that you've given notice to your office boy, Jimmy. That's a great mistake."

"But he's the most worthless little

"Judge," the expert interrupted, with a superior smile, "ought to give you an efficiency lesson. Take Jimmy back for he sings at his work, and there's no harm in that."

"Humph, that's no sign," said Judge Hylan. "A mosquito does that."

Self-Raising.

FOOD CONTROLLER HOOVER told at a meatless-wheatless banquet a story about a poultry proffiterer.

"A lady called in an order," said Mr. Hoover, "and asked the price of chicken."

"Them birds in the winter?" said the proffiter. "Wall, they're very fine quality stock. I can't let 'em go for less than 50 cents."

"Indeed?" said the lady. "Did you raise them yourself?"

"No," said the proffiter absently. "They was 70 cents yesterday."

A Valuable Machine.

CAPTAIN ANDERSON DANA, who has just got married at Plattsburg, is a grandson of the journalist, Charles A. Dana, and an inventor. He said: "My grandfather believed in marriage. He thought it steadied a man. I remember a story he used to tell."

"It's a story about a chap who asked a man:

"Have you ever heard anything about a machine for telling when a man is lying?"

"No," said the man.

"Have you ever seen one?" said the chap.

"I married one!" said the man. "By gosh, I married one!"